

Community & Employer Partnership Plan: 2016 - 2017

North Island Employment Foundations Society
Port Hardy Catchment Area #1



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The Community & Employer Partnership Plan (CEP) documents North Island Employment Foundations Society's (NIEFS') Annual Plan to increase employment opportunities for unemployed British Columbians through the use of partnerships, shared information, technology, and innovative processes and practices. NIEFS 2016-2017 CEP is aligned with the MSDSI Service Plans, Annual Plan for BC: LMDA, the BC BluePrint for Jobs and NIEFS EPBC contract, section 5.0 Community and Employer Partnerships.

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Purpose of the Community & Employer Partnership Plan

The purpose of the Community & Employer Partnership Plan (CEP) is to increase the employment opportunities for unemployed British Columbians through the use of partnerships, shared information, technology, and innovative processes and practices. NIEFS has developed this Community & Employer Partnership Plan to communicate and demonstrate how NIEFS will achieve greater employment opportunities for unemployed British Columbians living in the Port Hardy EPBC Catchment Area.

1.0 Information Sources used to develop this plan

NIEFS has developed this CEP plan using the following key information sources:

- NIEFS EPBC Campbell River Employment Service Center Contract #3: Section 5.0 Community and Employer Partnerships
- Ministry of Social Development & Innovation's 2016/2017 – 2018/2019 Service Plan (February 2016)
- 2015/2016 Annual Plan for British Columbia: Labour Market Development Agreement
- B.C.'s Skills for Jobs Blueprint
- B.C. Jobs Plan
- B.C. 2024 Labour Market Outlook
- Accessibility 2024: Making B.C. the most progressive province in Canada for people with disabilities by 2024
- February 2011: Campbell River Community Accord in Support of Workforce Development
- March 2011: Workforce Development in a Rural Transitioning Economy LMP Project Report
- Local and Regional labour market information assessing labour supply and labour demand in the coming year

Each of the above documents informed and guided the development of this comprehensive Community & Employer Partnership Plan. This CEP document demonstrates how best practices in rural employment and workforce development can be used to link the employment and skill development needs of labour forces with meeting the human resource needs of employers. A focus of this plan is the continued development of services for specialized population and services for persons with disabilities. The CEP plan will further demonstrate how communities can work together to coordinate provincial, regional and community labour market initiatives through linked labour market information systems, partnerships, engagement of community and employer leadership, and coordinated strategic planning and work plans.

2.0 Meeting CEP Plan Contract Requirements

In developing this CEP plan NIEFS built upon its extensive experience leading the development of rural community labour market programs and services that link the client's employment and skill development with meeting employers' human resource needs. NIEFS has developed extensive employer and community partnerships through a coordinated workforce development strategy that has been implemented over the past seven years. Each point in Section 5.1 to 5.7 of NIEFS EPBC contract has been addressed in this plan. The structure of this plan has been

developed from Section 5.5 of our Ministry of Social Development Employment Service Centre Contract:

- 5.5 *The Contractor will develop an annual Community and Employer Partnership Plan that:*
- (A) Responds to local community labour market needs;*
 - (B) Identifies proactive and responsive strategies and tools to quickly address labour market changes;*
 - (C) Establishes community and employer activities to address labour market needs;*
 - (D) Outlines strategies responding to the needs of Specialized Populations in the community; and*
 - (E) Is aligned with the annual plan that the Province is required to produce under the LMDA.*

This is the fifth Community & Employer Partnership Plan for NIEFS EPBC contract with the Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation. The primary intent of the plan is to implement the strategies and activities identified in NIEFS RFP bid submission and to respond to changing labour market conditions and opportunities within our catchment. NIEFS will build upon the extensive community development and capacity building work the organization has led in our catchment area and across the North Island over the past seven years. This plan lays a solid foundation for our continued work and excellence in rural employment and workforce development.

3.0 Responding to Local Community Labour Market Needs

Effectively responding to community labour market needs requires more than local knowledge it requires a regional perspective that incorporates and delivers services based on the uniqueness of the Port Hardy catchment and the communities across the North Island.

NIEFS has extensive experience, expertise, partnerships and systems in place to understand how labour markets function. Moreover, NIEFS demonstrates on a daily basis how a Community Employment Service Centre can play a key leadership role in improving the functioning of the labour market not only across the Port Hardy catchment area but across the North Island region as a whole.

A key leadership role NIEFS plays is providing local labour market information. In rural communities it is possible to identify, track, code, and reports local labour market statistics that are key indicators of local labour market supply and demand side conditions needed to support rapid response programming. NIEFS reporting system and database is integrated into our website design and allows us to generate real-time statistics from our North Island Job Bank. This data allows us to report out quarterly on the labour market trends we are seeing through job postings.

For more than ten years, the NIEFS North Island Job Bank has been a reliable indicator of labour market demand and is used extensively to develop programming and activities that connect labour supply with employers' human resource needs. Further, we are able to quickly provide data and create custom reports for other organizations (i.e. Provincial and municipal government; non-profits; employers; educational institutions; Chambers of Commerce;

Economic Development offices etc.) across the region to support their initiatives in delivering services and creating strong, healthy and resilient communities.

Job Postings generated from the NIEFS North Island Job Board are communicated across the North Island region through NIEFS' website; our Employment Service Centers; our Satellite offices; and through our subcontractor work locations. With 1,226,879 page views and 94,734 visitors (an increase of 15% and 9% respectively over the previous year) to the NIEFS website and Job Board between April 1, 2015 and March 31, 2016 the NIEFS website and North Island Job Bank is often the first way that employers come into contact with NIEFS. This allows us to then connect directly with employers regarding other services (i.e. wage subsidy; unpaid work experience; job development etc.) effectively building our employer relationships and targeting our marketing at the same time.

3.1 Understanding Local Labour Market Needs in Rural and Transitioning Economies

NIEFS has extensive networks and strong labour market information tracking systems to gather, interpret and communicate provincial, regional and local labour market information to our clients, employers and communities across the catchment area and North Island region. Labour Market information gathered by NIEFS from employers and job seekers enables us to develop community, employer and sector specific strategies to: support the functioning of seasonal labour markets; adjust to the effects of market cycles on resource extraction industries; support industries and companies that are growing; support employers with their implementation of major projects; replace the workers and the skills that are lost when people retire; utilize the skills of displaced workers; increase the employment participation of specialized populations; and assist employers and education and training organizations to train workers in needed occupations and to equip these workers with needed skills.

Thank you for all the assistance you have afforded Keltic Seafoods. Your considerations have in large part contributed to our labour force stability. You previously brought to my attention the Canada Job Grant opportunity.

As a result, I have put 23 employees through various courses under the Canada-BC Job Grant including: Basic Boiler Awareness; Refridgeration Operator; and Sanitization courses bringing in instructors to Port Hardy. Without such funding as you suggested we wouldn't have been able to do this. It is so important for rural employers to provide existing and prospective employee education and targeted industry specific training. This is key to our workforce stability.

Gordon Patterson
Human Resources Manager
Keltic Seafoods Ltd.

In 2009 and 2010 NIEFS partnered with the Regional District of Mount Waddington Economic Development Department and Mount Waddington Community Futures in the management and delivery of a Local Labour Market Partnership Agreement funded by the Ministry of Social Development. The Project was entitled, “A North Island Coordinated Workforce Strategy: Supporting Economic and Employment Growth in the Mount Waddington Region” and is the most detailed and exhaustive research project examining the Mount Waddington and area labour market and local economies carried out in the past 20 years -

[http://www.niefs.net/publications/North%20Island%20Coordinated%20Workforce%20Strategy_June%2022-10.pdf](http://www.niefs.net/publications/North%20Island%20Coordinated%20Workforce%20Strategy_June%202022-10.pdf).

The second phase of the North Island Coordinated Workforce Strategy occurred when the Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training provided funding for a Labour Market Partnership Agreement to support implementation of the North Island Coordinated Workforce Strategy and completed in June 2013. Part of the Implementation Plan for the Coordinated Workforce Strategy is the Workforce Planning and Action Committee (WPAC). NIEFS continues to be one of the Executive Committee members that provide leadership for this Committee.

3.2 Changing Labour Markets and Emerging Opportunities

Port Hardy Catchment Area Situational Analysis (Source: North Island Coordinated Workforce Strategy, July 2010, Mount Waddington Regional District Economic Development Commission). Updated by NIEFS June 2016.

In brief, the North Island is faced with the following situational realities:

- The curtailment of Neucel Speciality Cellulose mill in Port Alice has continued into 2016 impacting over 300 workers and spinoff services across the region;
- A resource-based economy exacerbated by 2008-2009 economic downturn; population decline and population and workforce aging;
- Growth in the Aboriginal labour force;
- Growth in Aboriginal Economic Development with the Namgis and k'awat'si Economic Development General Partner Corporation (KEDC) leading the way.
- Engagement and retention of youth is challenging;
- A need to attract and retain families and workers;
- Increasing need for education and training;
- Increased supports and services are needed for the unemployed and underemployed;
- There is opportunities for growth in value-added resources, aquaculture, tourism, construction and renewable energy;
- There are opportunities to grow a more diverse workplace and workforce by better utilizing the skills and abilities of specialized populations.

The following excerpts from the North Island Resource Regional Portal are illustrative of the challenges facing North Island communities and labour markets.

Finding and retaining workers in any rural region of British Columbia can be a challenge for employers of all sizes and sectors. The Mount Waddington region has a highly skilled, but small

workforce and labour market that requires a number of considerations by employers and job seekers:

- Cyclical and seasonal industries like logging, fishing and tourism mean that there are **irregular floods and droughts of labour** on the market for employers;
- Certain cyclical, external and seasonal industries pay very well meaning that other employers have to **work hard to retain some workers on a permanent or year-round basis**;
- Skill sets that employers need may not be present locally, so employers have to decide whether they **train someone, recruit externally or modify their business plan** to do without;
- The North Island needs more working families – recruiting efforts continue;
- **Spouses need jobs too** – employers may have to sell the skill set of a candidate's spouse to other local employers to generate recruitment success for their own company;
- Youth, as is the case in most rural regions, can be desirous of exploring new places and cities for a time in their lives – understanding their **commitment to the job and community is important at the time of hiring** – as well as ensuring that they **understand the long term aspirations of employers**;
- Opportunities need to be communicated broadly across many media – **one posting in a single location will likely be insufficient to generate interest**.
- Geography – given the vast geography of the region transportation to and from employment continues to be a challenge.

Based on this context and the research and consultation in the development of a North Island Coordinated Workforce Strategy the following strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities were identified.

Strengths

- Sustained development of the aquaculture industry on the North Island;
- Completion of the Telus Fiber Optic installation project in November 2014 improving telephone and internet connectivity for many of the smaller and more remote communities;
- Strong relationships with First Nations and the potential for increased collaboration following the Treaty Negotiation process;
- Several First Nations with proactive economic development strategies and partnerships including investment by KEDC for the redevelopment of the old Port Hardy Inn into the Kwa'lilas Hotel which will be a four star First Nations owned and operated tourism destination.
- The interest in and development of renewable energy projects.

Weaknesses

- Dependency on resource industries;
- High unemployment and low labour force participation rates among the Aboriginal population;
- Government funding cutbacks in education and training;
- School closures and the reduction of career and work-based education programs;
- The continuing trend of population decline and out-migration;
- Continued changes to ferry operations have resulted in fewer sailings and higher fares between Vancouver Island and Alert Bay & Sointula.

Opportunities

- The Aboriginal population offers a source of opportunity for employers to recruit, hire and train new entrants;
- Employers are interested in coordinated workforce development initiatives and were very receptive to participating in the Canada Job Grant to train employees;
- There is a coordinating body for workforce development;
- Expansion of the North Island tourism sector with an emphasis on adventure and eco-tourism;
- Vancouver Island North tourism continues to be a driving force for the region and held a regional tourism forum facilitated by Eco Plan consultants and attended by over 100 people across various North Island communities.
- The third largest cluster of potential wind and run-of-the-river energy generation capacities in BC;
- The Ministry of Social Development & Social Innovation Employment Program of British Columbia has created greater opportunity for persons with disabilities.

Threats

- The curtailment of Neucel Specialty Cellulose mill in Port Alice continued into 2016 impacting over 300 workers and the entire North Island economy;
- Strategies need to be developed to address the out-migration of young people who leave the North Island region;
- Competition and recruitment pressures from other regions;
- The need to reverse or minimize population declines;
- Low labour force participation rates and high unemployment among the First Nations population;
- Post-secondary education providers need to have a stronger local presence in the region;
- More community, social and recreational services and lifestyle amenities are needed in the region;
- The impact of changes in public policies on vulnerable rural communities, including increased regulations and “red tape” and the centralization of government offices and services.
- Although internet connectivity has improved with the Telus fibre project complete it is still a challenge for businesses. There remains inequitable access to high speed fibre between rural and urban communities making it difficult to attract and retain business.

4.0 Strategies to Address Labour Market Change and Opportunity

NIEFS is a cornerstone in our community building extensive partnerships with businesses, other organizations, communities and individuals in Port Hardy and across the North Island. These partnerships are integral to our ability to assist people to build self-sufficiency through active and sustainable participation in the labour market and assist employers to hire the right people, with the right skills at the right time contributing to a strong, resilient and healthy community.

The strategies developed by NIEFS have evolved from extensive dialogue with community partners, formal facilitated consultations and community meetings and NIEFS participation in the strategic planning sessions of our community partners and NIEFS participation on the Executive of the WPAC. These strategies were woven throughout our RFP bid submission and are kept current through annual participation in planning sessions, the sharing of labour market

information and the development of annual joint work plans between NIEFS and key stakeholders.

NIEFS board members come from North Island College, School District #72, West Coast Wealth Management, Cruise Human Resource Consulting, the retired CEO of a community television organization, and a retired HRDC employee. The composition and cohesive governance of NIEFS board and the communication links that are maintained through our board contribute to the ongoing ability of the organization to identify and respond to economic and labour market change across the North Island.

A key strategic change NIEFS made in 2015-2016 was the creation of two regional positions: Regional Manager, Community & Labour Market Services and Regional Manager, Operations. Formalizing these two positions has allowed NIEFS to further expand and align the organizational ability to address and respond to labour market changes and opportunity across the North Island in a more coordinated way.

Geographically vast the North Island region includes two separate catchments – Campbell River and Port Hardy. Although contracted as separate catchments under EPBC, delivery of service across the North Island benefits from a coordinated approach that encompasses the entire region and both catchments. In many cases, what occurs in the one community often impacts that of another. As such, NIEFS approach in designating regional staff to ensure we are further able to identify trends and opportunities to integrate programs and services that benefit the entire region particularly some of the more rural and remote communities has been very successful.

4.1 NIEFS Community and Employer Partnership Goals

All of NIEFS strategies for employment services and workforce development are meant to support the achievement of the following goals:

1. Assist workers find employment quickly.
2. Assist workers meet their employment, skill development and occupational goals.
3. Assist employers meet their human resource needs in a timely and cost efficient manner.
4. Communities throughout the North Island region are able to accurately describe their economic and demographic base, how it is changing, the required skills and those occupations that are and will be in demand.
5. There is increased workforce participation and retention of youth, older workers, aboriginal peoples, immigrants, people with disabilities, individuals who have experienced trauma or abuse, and people displaced from traditional resource sector employment.
6. There is an appropriate and coordinated supply of occupational skill development that meets the diverse needs of job seekers, employers and employees.
7. Effective partnerships (informal and formal) exist that connect key stakeholders through coordinated strategic planning and jointly implemented initiatives, activities and events.

4.2 Coordinated Employment & Workforce Development: 5 key strategies

To achieve the above goals NIEFS implemented 5 key strategies which are reviewed annually by NIEFS Board of Directors. NIEFS spearheads employment and workforce development initiatives based on the premise that collaboration, partnerships and a coordinated approach is needed between key stakeholders (private business, industry, unions, aboriginal, business and economic development organizations, community organizations, educational institutions and local governments). These strategies are essential to our future economic success and the functioning of our labour market. The outcome of these five strategies are employers have the right workers with the right skills, at the right time and workers have employment that meets their occupational interests and best uses their skills.

NIEFS 5 key Strategies for Implementing our Community and Employer Partnership Plan are:

Strategy #1: Build Strong Community Labour Market Information Systems

Strategy #2: Identify Key Employers and Workforce Development Stakeholders and then work directly with them

Strategy #3: Engage the Senior Leadership of Key Organizations and Employers in supporting workforce development

Strategy #4: Formalize Collaboration through Partnership Agreements, Memorandums of Understanding and Community Accords

Strategy #5: Coordinate and Link the Strategic Planning of Key Stakeholders, through the use of joint annual work plans and Memorandum of Understandings.

5.0 Activities that Address Community & Employer Labour Market Needs

Timeline	Activity
<p>Ongoing throughout the year</p>	<p>Linking and planning delivery of labour market services, initiatives and events through formal and informal processes with key community and regional partners including: Municipal government and Mount Waddington Regional District Economic Development commission; Chambers of Commerce (Port Hardy & Port McNeill); Immigrant Welcome Centre; North Island College; School District #85; Industry Training Authority; Vancouver Island Vocational Rehabilitation Society; North Vancouver Island Aboriginal Training Society; Heiltsuk Social Development; Community Futures Mount Waddington.</p> <p>Coordinating with community and regional partners reduces duplication of services and increases our ability to reach more clients. It also gives us a good understanding of other activities being undertaken that may be of benefit to clients.</p>

Ongoing throughout the year	NIEFS will maintain current web-based Labour Market information that tracks major project development in our catchment areas and presents this information through a Google map application.
Ongoing throughout the year	NIEFS will maintain a North Island regional job bank that includes catchment specific data and will market this job bank to both job seekers and employers. This job bank will be available to every job seeker and employer located within the North Island region. The job bank will be available at our Employment Service Centres, at our sub-contractors work sites, and on-line at www.niefs.net
Ongoing throughout the year	Through the Port Hardy and Port McNeill Chambers of Commerce NIEFS will communicate directly with North Island employers and present on topics regarding the employment services available to assist them in meeting their human resource needs. NIEFS will also attend monthly Chamber meetings that have a focus on labour market conditions and employment opportunities.
Ongoing throughout the year	NIEFS will be available to provide community labour market information to CAPA's and APA's to support the successful planning and delivery of Community Employer Partnership and Innovation Funds and Projects.
Ongoing throughout the year	NIEFS is included on the North Island Resource website - http://www.northislandresource.ca/ as a key resource for employers and job seekers in the catchment area.
Ongoing throughout the year	In response to ongoing communications with Economic Development Organizations, Chambers of Commerce, First Nation Organizations and various businesses on how their business is doing – hiring, laying off, boom or bust, etc. NIEFS aims to increase the opportunity to present labour market information to these groups. This labour market information is shared with staff and community members and informs decision making with regards to service delivery and targeting key industries/sectors if hiring or declining. It is also an opportunity to connect employers to the WorkBC Employment Service Centres and the services we provide to employers.
Ongoing throughout the year	NIEFS will continue to respond to major employer events (i.e. Neucel) across the community that result in the closing or opening of businesses. Examples include the development of specialized employment services to assist workers in connecting with opportunities created by the major economic development projects located in our region.

Ongoing throughout the year	NIEFS Regional Manager, Community & Labour Market Services will continue to participate on the WPAC Executive Committee.
Ongoing throughout the year	NIEFS will continue to host employer and industry information sessions throughout the year (i.e. Marine Harvest; Strategic, ITA etc.).
October, January, April, July	NIEFS will develop and circulate to key stakeholders 4 labour market reports annually that track labour demand (as indicated by job postings), major economic development projects, and major economic or labour market events affecting our catchment area.
Ongoing throughout the year	NIEFS will host a Client Appreciation day at our Port Hardy Employment Service Center in spring 2017.
Ongoing throughout the year	NIEFS Senior leadership will continue to participate in the strategic planning initiatives of North Island College, Immigrant Welcome Centre and will participate in planning initiatives hosted by the Regional District of Mount Waddington.
Ongoing throughout the year	NIEFS will continue our participation in the monthly social services interagency committee meetings.
Summer and Fall 2016 and Spring 2017	NIEFS will have a booth at Orca Fest, Filomi days, Community Futures Annual Barbeque & the Fall Fair, and the North Island Secondary School annual career event promoting our WorkBC Centres and satellite offices. These are the major community social events on the North Island over the spring, summer and fall of 2016/2017.
Ongoing throughout the year	NIEFS will continue to partner with the Immigrant Welcome Centre by providing space in our office for a settlement worker to provide services and better connect immigrants to employment services.
Ongoing throughout the year	With additional staffing in place NIEFS is able to regularly send a Disability Specialist Case Manager from the Campbell River office to continue to expand services for persons with disabilities through greater customized employment and job development services.
TBA	NIEFS was on the organizing committee and participated in the 2015 Mount Waddington Jobs & Careers Expo - http://www.mwjjobexpo.com/ and will do so again if another is organized for spring 2017.

6.0 Strategies Responding to the Needs of Specialized Populations

6.1 Engagement & Employment Service Strategies with Aboriginal People & Communities

- NIEFS will meet with representatives from NVIATS, Quatsino Nation, Kwakiutl Nation, Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nation and the N'amgis to support awareness and coordination of our respective employment services and referral processes.
- NIEFS will participate in key band and aboriginal organizations employment related events (examples include aboriginal youth and employment days, key cultural events).
- NIEFS will link with key band initiatives supporting major project implementation, BC Construction Association Employment initiatives, BCIT Aboriginal Mining initiatives and Aboriginal Trades programs.
- NIEFS will maintain information links with Aboriginal organizations and North Island College that support contract training and short term occupational skill development.

6.2 Engagement & Employment Service Strategies for Immigrants

- Continue to work with the Immigrant Welcome Centre of the North Island (they provide services to the entire North Island region) that links NIEFS employment services with immigrant employment and workforce development initiatives.
- Meet quarterly with representatives from the Immigrant Welcome Centre to monitor and implement work plan activities such as having a Settlement worker from the Immigrant Welcome Centre work regularly work out of NIEFS offices further connecting us to the immigrant population and them to employment services.
- Provide information regarding the Immigrant Welcome Centre's 1-800 services for immigrants and distribute pamphlets in multiple languages informing immigrants of distant services (Skype) and schedule for Settlement worker available for appointments at NIEFS offices.
- Work with the Immigrant Welcome Centre to identify employment service supports and resources available to immigrants living in rural and remote communities.
- Support the Immigrant Welcome Centre in connecting with Port Hardy and North Island Community Social Service networks. This is to facilitate the Immigrant Welcome Centre's development of Safe Harbour training for North Island organizations and these organizations participation in Safe Harbour initiatives.
- Work with the Immigrant Welcome Centre to provide translation and interpretative supports.
- NIEFS will maintain information links with Immigrant serving Organizations and North Island College that support contract training, short term occupational skill development and access to ESL learning supports.

6.3 Engagement & Employment Service Strategies for Persons with Disabilities

- With additional staffing in place NIEFS is able to regularly send a Disability Specialist Case Manager from the Campbell River office to continue to expand services for persons with disabilities through greater customized employment and job development services.
 - NIEFS is building rural community capacity to provide persons with disabilities access by increasing the human resource capacity of NIEFS to directly provide services for specialized populations with a disability.
 - NIEFS is a member of Rehabilitation Engineering & Assistive technology Society of North America (RESNA) and has one of 5 registered Rehabilitation Technologist on Vancouver Island.
 - A NIEFS Disability Team member sits on North Island College's Advisory Committee for Students with Disabilities.
 - NIEFS participates in monthly Port Hardy Social Services Interagency meeting where we promote EPBC services, inclusive and welcoming workplace and employment services for persons with disabilities.
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6.4 Engagement and Employment Service Strategies for Rural & Remote Populations

- With the creation of the Regional Manager, Community & Labour Market Services a key responsibility for this position is further reaching the rural and remote communities across the catchment to identify new partnerships and new ways to deliver service to clients.
- Meet quarterly with organizations that have a regional mandate to provide services across our two catchment areas to develop coordinated rural service strategies. These organizations include the Immigrant Welcome Centre of the North Island, North Island College, and North Vancouver Island Aboriginal Training Society.
- Coordinate employment and work force development services with Aboriginal Organizations holding ASET funded agreements or projects. This includes the coordination of referral processes and employment services for clients living in rural and remote locations.
- NIEFS will continue to develop strong relationships with rural and remote First Nation communities and will continue to explore how JCP and wage subsidy services can assist job seekers in these communities to acquire needed occupational skills.
- Distant Employment Services through our NIEFS website, 1-800 telephone services and itinerant services.
- Tracking of major economic development projects across the catchment area and putting into place employment services that assist job seekers to connect with these projects.
- Provision of the North Island Job Bank where local employers and job seekers anywhere in the catchment area have access to current local job postings.
- Participating in sector driven labour market activities for Forestry, Trucking, Construction, Tourism and Hospitality, Mining and Fish Farming.
- Provision of School to Work Transition workshops for Port Hardy and Port McNeill High School students. These workshops take place in the spring & fall of each year and are funded by the Society. This service is complimentary to the EPBC program and is part of the Society's youth engagement strategy.
- Active Member of the BC Rural Network, attend BC Rural Summits and present on rural employment and work force development services, issues and solutions.
- Continued development of Urban-Rural partnerships that link curriculum and content with expertise in rural service provision. This includes the on-going development of the Bridging Services for Women through a partnership with BRIDGES in Victoria.
- Operation of satellite employment centers in Port McNeill and Bella Bella.

6.5 Engagement and Employment Service Strategies for Bridging Services for Women

- In addition to the points made in 6.4 NIEFS has linked the BRIDGES Society from Victoria with our local Transition House and the North Island Crisis & Counselling Centre.
- BRIDGES will continue to develop marketing materials appropriate to our rural context and distribute print materials and rack cards through our Employment Service Centre.
- We are linking BRIDGES with community resources and community service directories, and reviewing curriculum to ensure appropriateness for rural and aboriginal populations.
- On-going connections with Women's services through monthly participation in Community Social Service networks and monthly service meetings.
- Continuously updating information regarding community services for women and the specialized services available to assist women who have experienced abuse or violence.

6.6 Engagement and Employment Service Strategies for Youth

- NIEFS sponsors workshops through Society funding to support youth with their school to work transition. Each spring & fall NIEFS presents workshops in high schools in Port Hardy and Port McNeill.
- NIEFS is knowledgeable regarding federal government youth programs and promotes these programs as an alternate strategy for gaining valuable life skills and work experience.
- NIEFS Work Support Centre and our website has identified, reviewed and keeps current youth employment resources, websites and on-line resources specifically developed to support youth with their job search and skill development.
- Refer and connect youth to the Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training and the Get Youth Working project (while funding is available) where employers are able to receive subsidies for hiring youth workers.

6.7 Engagement and Employment Service Strategies for Older Workers

- NIEFS has in place specialized services to assist workers affected by industrial adjustment and business closures and curtailments such as the case with Neucel Specialty Cellulose in Port Alice. For example, our partnership with North Island College and Community Futures set the platform for ongoing information sessions for people impacted by the Neucel curtailment.
 - NIEFS is featured on the North Island Resource Economic Development Portal and is working closely with the Port Hardy Chamber of Commerce to connect experienced workers with skill trade and professional employment opportunities.
 - NIEFS has produced a labour market presentation on the North Island's major economic development projects that outlines the hiring timelines for the occupations that are in demand and the processes being used by employers to hire for these positions.
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7.0 Alignment with the Provinces Labour Market Priorities

NIEFS CEP is aligned with NIEFS ELMS contract, our RFP bid submission, the BC Skills for Jobs Blueprint, The Ministry of Social Development & Social Innovation 2016/2017 - 2017/2018 Service Plan and the 2015/2016 Annual Plan for British Columbia: Labour Market Development Agreement. NIEFS Community and Employer Engagement plan will successfully support the implementation of EPBC key priorities and directions. Through our one-stop Employment Service Centres NIEFS will increase access to employment services for British Columbians in our catchment areas and across the North Island region.

7.1 Investing in training to better align British Columbians with sustainable job opportunities and to meet employer needs.

- NIEFS services and our Community Partnership plan focuses on employment first and the skills needed to access existing employment.
- For those workers with needed skills and/or work experience, NIEFS focus is to provide these job seekers with access to information and tools to quickly connect them to existing employment opportunities.
- For those job seekers lacking current marketable skills NIEFS has developed partnerships with North Island College and community employers across the North Island region to assist these workers in acquiring needed skills or to acquire employment where these skills can be learned.
- NIEFS has developed labour market services specific to the demographics of our catchment area's workforce and job seekers. NIEFS works collaboratively with our employers, educational institutions, and Ministry partners to coordinate service delivery to best meet the needs of job seekers and the human resource needs of employers.
- NIEFS works with education and skill development organizations in our catchment and across the North Island and with our employers to ensure there is an appropriate supply of occupational skill development available to meet the needs of our job seekers and the human resource needs of our employers.
- NIEFS will target in-demand occupations and growing industries to increase Labour Market Attachment outcomes for Tier 3 and 4 clients who are members of a specialized population through EPBC services such as Job Development, Customized Employment Development, Work Experience and Training (Construction Trades and Transportation, Retail/Hospitality and other Service Industries, Forestry and Resource Management).
- Offer career planning and job search workshops paired with STOC training that is targeted to local in-demand jobs and growing industries such as Tourism.

7.2 Continual development of strategies to engage all British Columbians, including underrepresented groups.

- NIEFS Executive Director was invited and will participate in meetings ending in 2016 as an EPBC contractor to take part in the Immigrant Employment Steering committee jointly chaired by the Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training and Citizenship and Immigration Canada on how best to serve immigrants through EPBC.
- Continue to partner with the Immigrant Welcome Centre to provide space at NIEFS office in Port Hardy for a settlement worker to provide services to immigrants in the region. This allows the Immigrant Welcome Centre to better connect with immigrants needing services and helps them connect with employment services through EPBC.
- NIEFS has the service capacity, facilities, technology and community partnerships to ensure communities awareness and knowledge of NIEFS EPBC employment services

- NIEFS Marketing Plans for our two catchment areas and North Island region details the marketing strategies and activities to support employer, job seeker and community organizations awareness and access to NIEFS services
- NIEFS tracks local labour market performance and provides employer and worker specific services to address labour market needs resulting from the opening of new businesses, the closing of existing businesses, sectoral initiatives to address sector restructuring (ex. forestry), and to support the attraction and implementation of new major economic development projects.
- NIEFS has developed specific strategies, activities and services to support specialized populations increased access to work and/or greater community attachment
- NIEFS is using technology, web-based service provision, 1-800 telephone services and itinerant services to support job seekers across our catchment area to find employment
- Through partnerships NIEFS can provide EPBC services before and/or after other community employment and/or training programs:
 - By providing Employability Readiness Assessment and Action Planning to identify and refer appropriate applicants to these job or work experience placement programs.
 - By providing coordinated and ongoing case management to ensure that the client is successful in completing the program.
 - By providing any needed workplace accommodations and aids for those clients living with a disability.
 - By providing employment follow up services and job retention and maintenance for after the Job program is complete and the client has been placed with an employer to ensure client remains self-sufficient in employment.
 - Or when the client was not successful in completing the program or securing employment, EPBC can step in easily to assist in moving the client forward without a disruption in service delivery to the client.

7.3 Continue partnering with local communities and organizations to further develop and increase community-based partnerships across the province.

- With the creation of the Regional Manager, Community & Labour Market Services a key responsibility for this position will be to develop a plan to further reach the rural and remote communities across the catchment to identify new partnerships and new ways to deliver service to clients.
- NIEFS Labour Market Programs and Services have been developed to meet EPBC program and contract requirements. NIEFS EPBC services have also been built from existing Local Labour Market Partnership studies describing the demographic and economic base of our communities and the needed services to support effect workforce development that is aligned with employers' human resource needs.
- There is a Workforce Planning Action Committee and a Community Accord in place that provides a coordinating framework for linking employers, education organizations, community service organizations, aboriginal organizations, business and economic development organizations and our community employment service centres.
- Extensive partnering through the development of joint work plans and through sub-contract relationships with key community and employer organizations.

7.4 Enhance EPBC program supports through continued improvement of research and innovation, measurement, and reporting capabilities.

- Given NIEFS almost 30 year history, the organization has well-established partnerships both formal and informal and is seen as a trusted resource across the North Island. Our extensive network of partnerships allows us to quickly identify and act on opportunities for innovation. As a result, NIEFS is often asked to pilot new programs and services which we are always eager to explore.
- NIEFS is member of the North Island Resource Economic Development Portal for the North Island. This is a unique data base that profiles community assets that can support the successful implementation and delivery of major economic development projects.
- NIEFS has developed a labour market review that is available to key stakeholders that describes current labour market demand and significant events or changes to our local economies. This report will be distributed quarterly to employers, clients and community organizations.
- NIEFS provides Labour Market Information presentations to employers and community organizations and is frequently asked to present at Regional and Provincial conferences on Rural Employment and Workforce Development.
- NIEFS has developed a strong relationship with the BC Centre for Employment Excellence. Currently, NIEFS is 1 of 4 WorkBC Employment Service Centres piloting a mentoring program for Career Development Practitioners which provides our Case Managers and Facilitators the opportunity to learn from colleagues around the province and generate new innovative ideas for delivering the EPBC across the North Island.
- NIEFS Regional Manager, Community & Labour Market Services completed a Master of Arts in Community Economic Development from the University of Victoria that culminated in an academically rigorous major research project with NIEFS as the client entitled “Building Connection: Linking Labour Supply and Demand in Support in Major Development Projects” which can be found online at:
<http://niefs.net/publications/S.Baikie%20-%20MACD%20-%20Building%20Connections%20-%20Final%20Apr%202016.PDF>